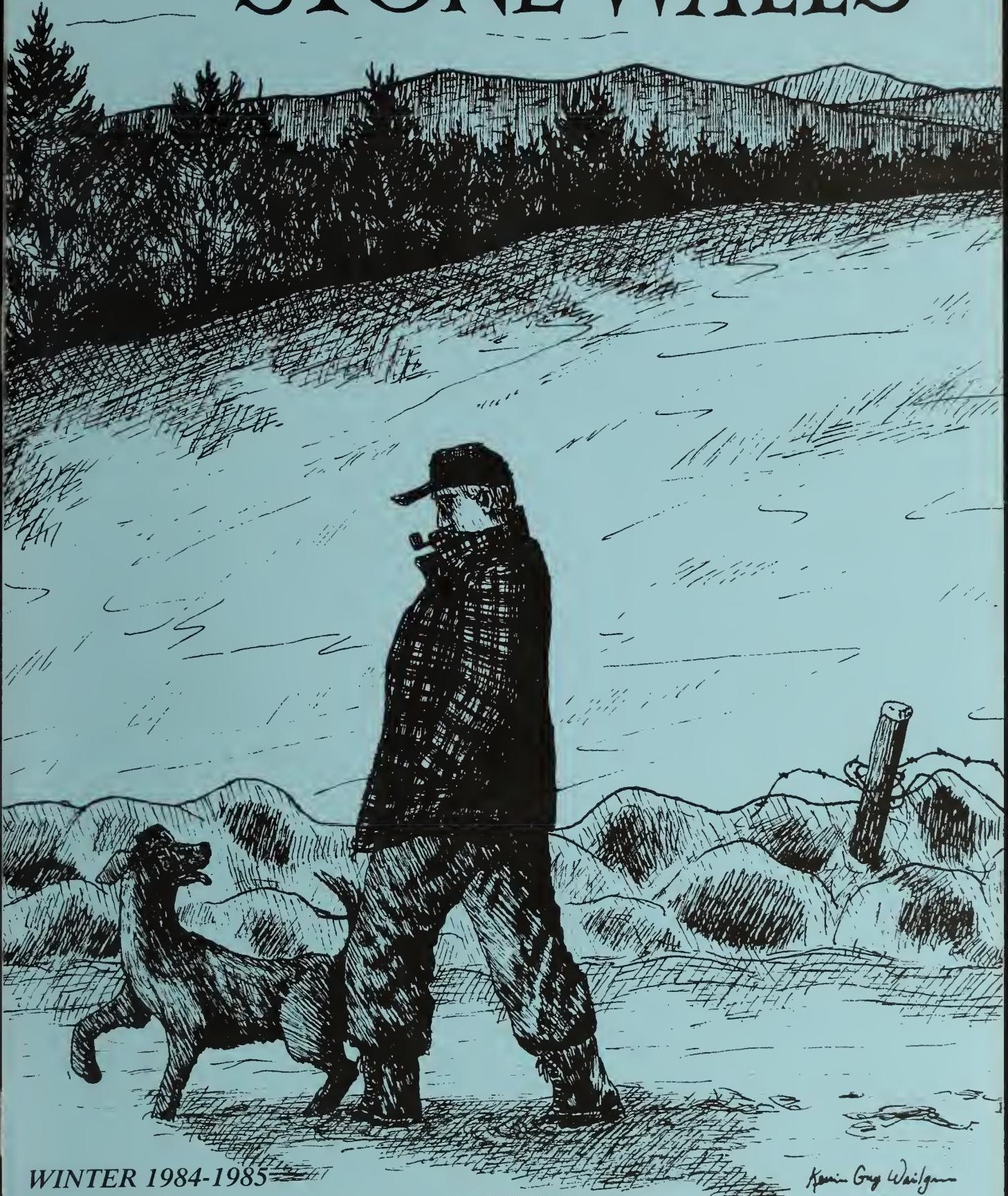


# STONE WALLS



WINTER 1984-1985  
\$2.00

SUBJECT INDEX

Karen Guy Walgren

# EDITORIAL

Greetings from the land of eternal warm!

Part of my feelings about spending winter away from winter is sort of guilt about not being around to share the discomforts of cold winds, icy steps, fuel bills, putting on and taking off layers of wraps every time going out is required. But mostly I feel I'm missing an important part of the year. I miss seeing the field of snow stretching away from my back porch--filled with sparkles from the rising sun--the wind picking up the loose snow for a wild dance and finally lifting it to decorate the top of a drift under the trees at the far edge of the field. I miss feeling the varied textures of warmth coming into the house from the cold night. Most of all I miss meeting the test of endurance and survival that a hard winter puts to all and the satisfaction of passing it, of being able to

"Keep my heart a living thing  
Through winter's racking storms  
Until another spring."

*Ida S. Joslyn*

Orlando, Florida

Cover by Kevin Guy Wailgum

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## CONTENTS

- |    |   |                         |
|----|---|-------------------------|
| 2  | Diary of Mari C. Gibbs                            |                         |
| 6  | Another World .....                               | Jeffrey Fowler          |
| 8  | One Hundred Years Ago in the Hilltowns ..         | compiled by B.J. Aitken |
| 9  | thoughts before a woodpile .....                  | c.j. blake              |
| 10 | Peter the Slave.....                              | John Wright Crane       |
| 12 | The Other Side of Me .....                        | Zenon D'Astous          |
| 13 | Early Schools .....                               | Leona A. Clifford       |
| 16 | Snow Fantasy .....                                | Holly A. Aucoin         |
| 17 | The Life and Times of John A. Huffmire, M.D. .... | Grace Wheeler           |
| 25 | Subject Index Vol. 6-9 .....                      | compiled by Donna Drew  |

# Diary of Mari C. Gibbs

## (Introduction)

As you read these excerpts from this young girl's diary, it is well to remember something of the background of her daily life, of the household of which she was a part and of the larger world as well.

In the year 1869 few households had running water or plumbing of any kind. No frozen pipes! But no bathrooms either and few kichen sinks. Hot water came from a "reservoir" in the kichen range, or a copper boiler filled and put across two lidded holes on the same stove, or from the ever present huge tea-kettle. All the water had to be carried into the house (and all the waste water carried out!) and was not lavishly used. Laundry was an all day undertaking.

Daily chores occupied all members of a family:

Milking and caring for the farm animals

Chopping wood, sawing wood, bringing in wood, stoking the fires,

Cleaning and filling kerosene lamps and lanterns,

Cooking three hearty meals and washing up afterward,

Churning and butter making,

Dressmaking and quiltmaking,

Sweeping and dusting.

Stoves had replaced or augmented fireplaces for some time past. Both were generally wood burning, and what stacks of wood were required for heating and cooking! All done with hand tools: saws, axes, and mauls.

Clothing was available "ready made" but was still often made at home. Sewing machines were available if not common.

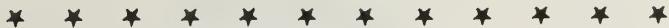
Food was hearty and plentiful: milk, butter, cheese, fresh meat, salt pork, corned beef, cakes, pies, bread, garden vegetables in summer, and orchard fruits, wild berries, root crops in winter and preserved fruits.

People traveled on foot, on horseback, or in horse-drawn vehicles. Farm "power" was provided by horses and oxen. There were no movies, no TV, no phonographs, no electricity. But there was no lack of books, magazines, and newspapers. Dickens, Thackeray, Melville, Longfellow, Irving, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Whitman, Mark Twain were household words. I wonder if anyone from the hilltowns went to Boston to hear Dickens read from his works. It is reported that five thousand people lined up to buy tickets at \$2.00 a ticket, \$25.00 from scalpers.

In 1869 Ulysses S. Grant was President. The nation was recovering from the trauma of the Civil War. It was a period of invention and change. On May 10, 1869 the driving of The Golden Spike in Utah completed the transcontinental railroad and opened up the country to homesteaders. Unprofitable New England farms were being abandoned for the promise of Western acres. Mills began to close and the population of the hill towns to dwindle. It is hard to tell how much or how little of this affected Mari Gibbs and her

family. Diaries were records of daily happenings and seldom mentioned anything

else, but that does not mean that the wider world went unfelt or unnoticed.



### Diary of Mari C. Gibbs

Sent to me by

Mrs. Richard Gibbs. Oct. 12, 1976  
Rt. 7 104 Sly Run  
Noblesville, Indiana 46060

Mrs. Gibbs said she was the dau.-in-law of Donald Gibbs. He was son of Frank N. Gibbs and sister of Elsie (Gibbs) Hill, whose article on Frank Nelson Gibbs appeared in the Winter 1984 issue of "Stone Walls."

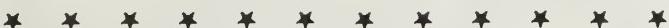
Mrs. Gibbs asked Donald why Mari was

in bed in 1869. He said that she had back troubles from an injury caused by being pulled out of bed onto the floor by her sister, Hattie.

The diary is exceptional for a 10 yr. old girl. It gives a broad range of activities on Joseph Gibbs' farm, & people her parents saw and entertained. Many relatives and neighbors are mentioned.

It is fascinating to read and one can almost seem to be present -- even tho it was written 115 years ago.

Doris W. Hayden



Mari was 10 years old and in bed. She was the daughter of Joseph A. and Hannah (Fish) Gibbs and lived on the Chester Road, near the Chester line.

1869

Fri. Jan. 1 It has been very cold today and is bitter cold tonight Mother made a chicken pie for dinner Bernard gave Hattie an Accordian

Jan. 2 Aunt Alida is 39 years old today

Jan. 4 Miss Smith came here tonight

Jan. 5 Father carried Miss Smith & Hattie to school today & brought them home

Jan. 6 Very rainy father carried Miss Smith & Hattie to school & brought them home

Jan. 7 Meeting this evening to Mr. Smithes Delila came here Mother & Miss Smith went to meeting

Jan. 8 Mother went to Grandfather today

Jan. 9 Delila went home this evening

Jan. 10 Aunt Ann is 81 years old today

Jan. 11 George Collester & family started for Georgia Anna Collester is eight years

old today

Jan. 12 Mrs. Blakely washed for Grandmother Doctor Lucas was here

Jan. 14 Sarah Jane Johnson two years old today

Jan. 15 Sent a lock of hair to Mrs. Manley

Jan. 16 Mr & Mrs James Robbins spent the evening here Doct Lucas brought aunt Ellen up here got a letter from Mrs. Manley

Jan. 17 Grandmother went home with aunt Ellen Father brought me a newspaper it had some shears in it

Jan. 18 Miss Smith sent me an orange & sugar heart Sent for medicine of Mrs Manley Father & Mother have been to the meadow brought me some aigs

Jan. 19 Uncle Robbins & Aunt Dolly Ann took dinner here Got some medicine today

Jan. 20 Sarah & Addie were here Pat left today

Jan. 25 Joseph Aldrich Amanda & Mary spent the evening hours here



Jan. 28 Dedication at North Blandford  
Tues. Feb. 2 Father & Mother went to  
the meadow  
Feb. 7 Hattie is eight years old today  
Feb. 9 Aunt Alida came here today  
Ambrose & Dolly Ann took tea here  
Feb. 10 Frank is six years old today  
Feb. 11 Father & Aunt Alida went to see  
grandfather Fish  
Feb. 12 Mr & Mrs Albert were here this  
evening Naney came with them  
Feb. 13 Aunt Alida went home today  
Aunt Harriet took tea here & Father car-  
ried her to the Factories  
Feb. 14 Parks Knox took tea here Have  
not been dressed today  
Feb. 15 Mr Barker came to see me today  
Father brought him & carried him home  
Took dinner here  
Feb. 17 Mr. Barker has been here today  
Father brought Aunt Ann Collester up  
here this evening  
Feb. 19 Ida Bartlett came here today with  
Mr. Barker Mother put on her bed quilt  
Delila came here tonight  
Feb. 20 Mrs Blakely quilted this after-  
noon  
Feb. 21 Mr Barker has been here today  
Leftme some medicine to last several  
days  
Feb. 22 Finished the quilt  
Feb. 23 Put on another bed quilt today  
Feb. 24 Mother got her quilt off this  
evening  
Feb. 25 Mrs. R. Burdick, Mrs. A. Burdick  
& Frank made a call here Aunt Ann  
went home  
Mon. Mar. 1 Father brought Delila from  
Mrs. Cannons  
Mar. 2 Mr Barker has been here today  
Henry Bemis & Ona Barker took dinner  
here  
Mar. 3 The old sow had 11 pigs today  
Delila went home  
Mar. 4 Uncle John Gibbs died this morn-  
ing

Mar. 5 Mr Barker has been here today  
Mar. 9 Mr Barker has been here today  
Mar. 10 Miss Smith school closed  
Mar. 11 Father & Mother went after  
Hattie  
Mar. 12 Grandmother came home today  
J. Robbins & Maria were here to dinner  
Flora Wright & Lydia Clark took tea here  
Ida went home  
Mar. 13 Bernard went to Becket Brought  
us some books  
Mar. 15 Bernard went to Springfield  
Sold 8 lbs butter 45 cts lb to the Factor-  
ies  
Mar. 16 Bernard went to the Factories  
brought Delila here  
Mar. 17 Father & Mother have been  
down to see Grandfather Fish Father  
brought me this Diary today  
Mar. 18 Mr Linus Shepard died Aunt  
Lydia Gibbs came here today with Mr  
Barker Father sold a calf today for 9.60  
cents Delila went home  
Mar. 19 Sold the red cattle, 257½ Sold 6  
lbs butter, 45c  
Mar. 20 Father brought home his sleighs  
from the meadow  
Mar. 21 Mr Herin brought me an orange  
today & a paper of lozenges  
Mar. 22 Mr Herin gave me an orange  
today  
Mar. 23 It snowed today  
Mar. 24 It has been a very pleasant day  
Mar. 25 Miss Polly Gibbs & Herbert Tut-  
tle took tea here  
Mar. 26 Father has been to the meadow  
Amanda has a little daughter born yester-  
day morn  
Mar. 27 Mr Barker has been here today  
Mar. 28 It has been very pleasant today  
Father caried me outdoors  
Mar. 29 Very rainy today I am ten years  
old today  
Mar. 30 Rainy all day Mr Franklin bot-  
tomed some chairs for Mother  
Mar. 31 Blustering weather with snow

# Another World

by Jeffrey Fowler

Devils invade my sleep. Viciously they tear me from the arms of Morpheus. As I near the real world these creatures pursue, shrieking terrorizingly, half-human, half-other-wordly hisses and wails.

I am awake. The devils have vanished---but not their voices. They continue outside. From an upstairs window I look down at a small meadow flanked to the right by woods, and to the left by a tar road and then again woods. At the moment this meadow is not the familiar clearing that accepts the cultivation of my garden and the trafficking of the townfolk. Another world turns here -- one of half light and half dark. The creatures of the night find their way home in the almost dark of a predawn mist. The almost day promises safety for its worshipers.

In the middle stands a large doe, tall, looking down at the whole flat world. She, too, hears the wails of the banshees. Unlike myself, a dweller of houses, an observer from upstairs windows, she knows this sound. It is part of her world as the siren is part of mine.

She reacts: a living synthesis of sinews, muscles, coordination, action potentials, and sixth senses. She leaps and darts to the right. But the grass distorts, and the mist swallows, and the shrieking has outflanked her, heading her escape to the middle. She leaps away from the menace in the opposite direction only to be flanked by another scrambling snarling creature. The doe continues her futile efforts to escape, first challenging to the left, then challenging to the right. Slowly she expands her trap, and gradually, ever so gradually, moves this dance closer to the road.

There is a gesture, a glance, a cocking of the head, an arching of the neck, and a fawn leaps into motion across the road to his mother's side. Together, only inches apart, they make their synchronized escape to the opposite wood.

The attackers, having lost their prey, become two bobcats silently and invisibly making their way home before sunrise.





# One Hundred Years Ago in The Hilltowns

*(Items taken from the Westfield Times and the Daily Hampshire Gazette published in 1885.)*

by B.J. Aitken

**GRANVILLE:** The cold is very severe, but business is lively at the drum factories, and lumbermen are taking advantage of the snow for sledding and logging, but sledding is best.

Blacksmiths are having a lively time, from early morn till late at night with hardly time to eat.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Barnard gave an entertainment the evening of December third. It was the 12th birthday of their daughter Ida.

**MONTGOMERY:** C.M. Washburn has received his commission as postmaster. Ex postmaster Stiles has the sympathy of the community in his irreparable loss in losing the post office, upon which he has so long depended for a living. He would not have fallen victim to the gullotine had he not been an "offensive partisan." Bill Avery's head will roll into Cleveland's charger next for a similar reason. He refused once to vote for Ben Butler.

H.H. Kelso recently caught six coons on successive nights.

Driver Avery has driven the mail team since four years ago last June, and has not lost but two trips in all that time, and one of his horses has made all the trips save one, during this time.

**WESTFIELD:** Lost, strayed or stolen, a copper boiler, belonging to the ladies benevolent society of the First Church. Has not been seen by its owners since the excursion of last July. If the present possessor has used it enough to pay for keeping they will please return it to the church.

A new comer to Broad Street is evidently preparing to go into the poultry business on a large scale, having recently purchased twenty-four roosters, all vigorous crowers, so the neighbors say.

**CHESTER:** W.S. McGeoch and Co. are filling large orders for beds, piano stools, etc.

Lyman E. Wright commenced running a meat cart in the village.

Fred Wills is shipping a quantity of beech logs to the Williams Mfg. Co. of Northampton to be used in the manufacturing of baskets.

Lyman Oles has taken two large foxes from his traps this week.

**CUMMINGTON:** J.C. Thayer, who was a carrier for the Gazette in the old days when the paper was delivered by post-riders and stages, writes to say, that his old horse, which he drove in a stage back in 1861, has died, or rather, he had it killed, it being over 30 years of age. The animal could eat hay up to the last but became a little stiff.

A.M. Chaw is home from a trip selling furs, gloves and mittens.

The L.L. Brown Paper Co. of West Cummington is boring an artesian well near the mill for the purpose of obtaining wash water. It is now nearly one hundred feet deep, and the progress is slow, the rock being hard.

William Tower recently killed a pig seven months and twenty-two days old, which weighed 350 pounds.

**HUNTINGTON:** Jack Sullivan, while hunting Saturday, narrowly escaped serious consequences. Firing at a grey squirrel, his double barrel shotgun burst near the breech, injuring his left wrist, blowing it full of powder and making a painful but not serious wound. The gun was a muzzle loader.

Henry King, for several years porter at the Parks House, has retired from service and is succeeded

by Frank Cooney.

The young people's singing school has been inaugurated, with Schuyler Clark as teacher.

**WEST WORTHINGTON:** The unusually quiet village of West Worthington has been all excitement the past few days over the sudden appearance of a bear in our midst. Warren Thayer first seeing him near the school house last Wednesday evening as he was returning home from work. Later in the evening he was seen by others. Early the next morning all the men in the neighborhood, armed with guns, started the pursuit and were soon on the track. About noon he was seen near the woods, back of Mr. Miner's home. The hunters were joined by a party of men with hounds coming from Worthington Corners, and the search was continued until night, but all in vain. Bears still live and roam the woods much to the terror of all the women and children in the neighborhood.

**HAYDENVILLE:** C.W. Harlow died suddenly Wednesday, after an illness of two years. He took care of his horse the day previous to his death and his family thought him more comfortable than he had been. He came from Cummington about five years ago, and has been head carpenter at the Brass Works since.

Alonzo Sweet goes to Spencer as foreman of the Brass Works recently started in that town, for the manufacture of water filters.

**CONWAY:** Conway, in common with many other places is reaping the fruits of the unrestricted sale of intoxicants in the increase of drunkenness, and many are asking what will be the result, unless measures are taken to suppress the evil. A case of small-pox would awaken alarm in the community, while the moral as well as the physical pest-house, the rum shop, is allowed to work the ruin to soul and body unchecked.

### thoughts before a woodpile

*patient beyond patient now;  
altered as they altered once  
the breasted rock, the living air;  
their leaves, a distant melody;  
their limbs, as scattered dreams.  
& perhaps (as i) the aggregate  
in some way one yet haunted by  
the music & the alchemy  
of what once stood cathedral-like  
amid a finer realm.*

*yet warming too, these choired rows,  
this paradox (divided-whole)  
become this stiff geometry:  
a fuel to soften winter hearts;  
a light to brighten dreams.*

c.j. blake

# Peter the Slave

*From the Diary of Deacon Alvah Eames  
in The History of Washington*

*by John Wright Crane*

When I was a boy, I remember an old blind Negro who lived with a family within a hundred rods of my father's house. He was supposed to be over one hundred years old. No one knew his age - he didn't himself. He was the grandson of an African chief. When out one day with other boys at play on the sea shore he was seized by a band of kidnapers, carried on board their ship, brought to Hartford, Connecticut, and sold as a slave. Mr. David Ashley, who bought Peter, was a farmer and had a son named Moses who was a little older than Peter. He lived with Mr. Ashley many years. He was treated with kindness, taught to read, to observe the Sabbath, and to attend public worship. Here he first heard of a Savior, believed in him and became a Christian.

Mr. Ashley died, but Peter, having become so attached to the family, refused to leave them, preferring to follow the fortunes of the Ashley family than to accept proffered liberty. Mr. Ashley's son Moses, having married and disposed of his property in Hartford, removed to Westfield, taking Peter with him; and here he raised a family of six daughters and two sons -- all of whom Peter dangled on his knee and to whom he was greatly attached. Here he attended on the Sabbath the ministry of the Rev. John Ballantine, father of the Rev. Wm. G. Ballantine, the first settled minister in Washington.

About 1770, Mr. Ashley sold his farm in Westfield and bought a tract of land on

Washington mountain, land being cheap then. This land was around and near the pond, which later was named after him, Lake Ashley. Mr. Ashley, after looking the land over in and around Pittsfield, had chosen Washington, as the former place was low and marshy and subject to fever and ague. Previous to moving his family to his new home, Mr. Ashley sent Peter on ahead to girdle the trees, a practice much in vogue in the early settlement of the town. At this time the hills and valleys were swarming with deer -- the Indian name for Pittsfield being "Pontosuc," signifying "a run for deer." One day as Peter was at work girdling trees, there came along a deer so close to him that he struck him with his ax and killed him. Peter was so overjoyed with the event that the neighbors had to tie him up, that he might come to his senses again.

After Mr. Ashley had moved to Washington his health failed him and the care of the farm fell upon Peter and the younger son, the older son, Moses Jr., being in college, having entered at the age of fourteen. He graduated from Yale in 1767 and settled with his father in Washington in the spring of 1772. He was an ardent patriot; was in Capt. Porter's company of minute men and marched with it to Cambridge, April 23, 1775. He stayed and enlisted in the Continental army in May 1775 and was in the battle of Bunker Hill. The 17th of June was a day of anxiety to his friends at home, for on the morning of that memorable day they distinctly heard

the report of the cannon in the vicinity of Boston. What did it mean? Oh! There was a battle and they invoked the God of battles to protect their son and brother. Work they could not; but spend the day going from house to house talking about and fearing the result of that day's battle. Moses was protected thru Bunker Hill's bloody fight, and he continued in the service until the close of the war and was promoted to the rank of General. Near the end of the war he married and settled in Stockbridge.

During the war Peter helped take care of the farm and of the family. He was faithful and industrious, a humble servant of God, always in his pew on the Sabbath -- called the "Negro pew." He was beloved by all who knew him, especially by the Ashley family. At length his second master died and Peter went to live with General Ashley in Stockbridge. There he became blind. Soon after General Ashley died suddenly, being drowned while repairing his mill dam. His widow, not having that regard for him that her husband had, refused to take care of him, and so he was brought back to Washington and lived a few weeks at our house, my mother being one of the daughters he had helped

take care of when a child.

I remember an old military hat that he brought with him, given him by General Ashley. He thought so much of this hat that he would have it placed within his reach and often he could be seen feeling of it, to see if the button was where it should be.

I remember leading him about the house and yard and his saying "O, there is no trap door here," -- for it was the custom in those days to have a trap door in the kitchen floor in order to get into the cellar by means of a short ladder. Peter, being blind, was afraid of trap doors.

After his removal from our house to the family mentioned in this article, I saw him often and have a vivid recollection of his appearance. Seated in a big arm chair in the corner with his hat on -- when his meals were given him, he would take the plate, lay it in his lap, take off his hat, raise his sightless eyes towards heaven and implore God's blessing on his food. This was his invariable practice; and here in this family Peter closed his earthly pilgrimage in April, 1806, and received a Christian burial, Rev. Wm. G. Ballantine officiating at the funeral.



# The Other Side of Me

by Zenon D'Astous

The quiet euphony of autumn weighs heavily upon me like birds flying down the sky to winter in other places; those I love march away to the muffled drums of summer's fading song.

I find no peace in this now sequestered place. Birds left behind sing no songs, only blue jays and crows to scold the empty sky. Shadows of yesterday walk with me but are forever still. The wind grows cold, the days of melancholy embrace me.

The fires of autumn that warmed me when friends were here now burn cold like ancient stars. The days pass into long evenings of looking into myself. And I discover how little do I know that which I am and I ponder in my heart this autumn loneliness.

The October sky lays clouds upon clouds. The gray layer spans from horizon to horizon. Driving rains spill from this pewter basin stripping the trees of their final vestige. At dusk the sun dims in the blue haze of deepening autumn. In days that follow, marauding winds sweep low over the land. They scatter leaves and

memories about, and I look upon a summer which is spent. I walk alone and listen to the voiceless silence of my heart. All my dreams are hidden from the world. I am lost in thought, in darkness deep. I have no words to tell you of my grief, and sorrow preys upon my solitude.

If I did not love then I would not be lonely. But never doubt I love, and I should not need windows in my heart that you can see, I love. And there I stand the other side of me. A fool with more heart than mind. Forgetting that I live in a time of acquaintances and not real and tangible friendship. And love has a sense of pity to it.



# Early Schools

*By Leona A. Clifford*

There is a lot of talk about education and what to do about it next! I think it is interesting to know that Massachusetts was worried about it in 1647 too, and the following article is quite revealing although their aims were a great deal different than ours today.

## ● Massachusetts School of Law, 1647

### Yo Ould Deluder Satan

It being one chiefe project of ye olde deluder, Satan, to keepe men from the knowledge of ye Scriptures, as in formr times by keeping ym in an unkowne tongue, so in these latr times by perswading from the use of tongues, yt so at least ye true sence and meaning of ye originall might be clouded by false glosses of saint-seeming deceivers, yt learning may not be buried in ye grave of or fathrs in ye church and Commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors. It is therefore ordred yt in evry township in this jurisdiction, after ye Lord hath increased ym number to 50 housholdrs, shall then forthwth appoint one wth in thier towne to teach all such children as shall resort to him, to write and reade, whose wages shall be paid eithr by ye parents or mastrs of such children, or by ye inhabitants in generall, by way of supply, as ye maior part of those yt send their children be not oppressed by paying much more ym they can have ym

taught for in othr townes, & it is further ordered yt where any towne shall increase to ye numbr of 100 families or househouldrs, they shall set up a grammer schoole, ye mr thereof being able to instruct youth so farr as they shall be fitted for ye university, provided yt if any towne neglect ye performance hereof above on yeare, yt every such towne shall pay 5 pounds to ye next schoole till they shall perform this order."

Granville's first school beginnings are now obscured by time. The first mention of them was on March 8, 1762, when it was voted that the "sum of 20 pounds be raised to support schooling in Granville" (then including Tolland). In 1763 there were six districts. In a somewhat haphazard fashion they increased to thirteen by 1802. Five were in the Middle Parish, now West Granville, and one of those was Ore Hill. All were the one room type, as antiquated today as the dodo.

I got my first nine years of education at Ore Hill. I graduated in 1927 in the last class in town to have to complete nine grades. After that it dropped to eight as it is now. The building went up for the second time in 1814, the first probably burned, and over the some 125 years it was in business, many local boys and girls received their only formal education.

Very few continued on to higher education. My sister and I went there, our mother before us, her sister who had been married before mother was born in 1886, her two brothers and my grandfather's three step brothers and one step sister, who lived where Avery Bates does now. So, for much of its career it had one or another of the Nelson clan to contend with! Now it has gone the way of several others in town -- it is a home -- that of Leroy Clink. I like to see it still standing there!

In those "good old days" there was no such thing as a school bus. Our conveyance was "shanks mare," and we walked three quarters of a mile each way. many had a much longer trip. Edward Ransom's family, living within a mere jump of the Connecticut state line, had at least a three mile hike. The youngest one, a little girl, was brought by her mother with a horse and buggy. This gave Sarah Ransom a chance to visit my mother on her way home sometimes. I well remember her coming in one morning. Mother was "doing up" the dishes, but she had already got out her molding board and all the other necessities for making pies. Mrs. Ransom pitched into the pie business and mother finished the dish job, chatting all the way. What a good old neighbor and life long friend she was, though they moved to West Hartland before Helen finished grammar school.

We had very few vacations and holidays then. Thanksgiving, Christmas, Washington's Birthday, and Memorial Day seem to be all I remember now, some 60 odd years later. We had one novelty, unkown today, called "mudtime" vacation when the ground thawed in the spring. It lasted until we could once again travel on more or less solid ground. Of course we had snow days when the roads were drifted sky high.

Then we had to wait until Nelson Frisbie with a double span of horses and his big wood-shod sled came along breaking out the road, accompanied by men to shovel out the deepest of drifts.

In those days we had to go to the nearest house for the school's daily supply of drinking water. We took turns going to Gilbert Miller's place, and we looked forward to it, for his housekeeper Miss Libby Ives (Aunt Libby to one and all) was most generous with cookies and other goodies. It also gave her a chance to quiz us on what had gone on at the latest church supper, dance or whatever!

There was no hot lunch program. We carried ours in a round tin pail with a bail. Many used the old oblong tobacco cans. Today they bring a fortune at flea markets. In every one of them were good solid sandwiches of homemade bread, with cake, pie or cookies, plus apples, nothing exotic, you might say, but it sure tasted good.

We "suffered" (?) from lack of "enrichment programs" but we enjoyed many activities. We drew pictures and other art work; we sang songs, our teacher setting the key on a pitch pipe; we played lots of strenuous games. When it snowed, one of these was Fox and Geese. Remember that? We would return from recess soaked, and teacher would get us around the old wood stove to dry off while the room REEKED of wet wool socks and rubber boots.

We skated on our feet, no skates, in Miller's meadow in winter; looked for flowers in spring, and for chestnuts in the fall on the last large chestnut tree I remember, that stood at the beginning of the old Otis road, now long abandoned. We sometimes collected and burned tent caterpillar nests. Once we found a woodcock's nest and were fascinated with it until some bad child destroyed it! We



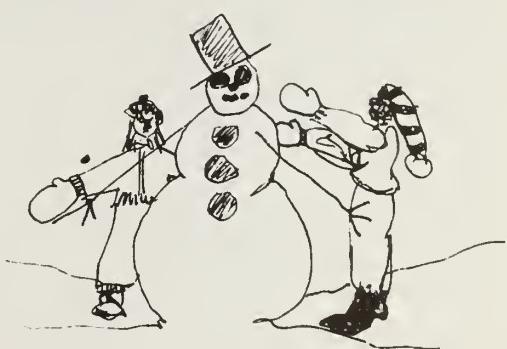
Ore Hill School House in Granville  
about 1888

decorated soldiers' graves on Memorial Day, and put on "exercises" for our parents to "enjoy" at Christmas. We ended the school year with a picnic to which all of us looked forward. Never a dull moment!

BUT -- all was not fun and games. We were in school from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. We learned to read, write (Palmer Method), spell, and figure, along with lessons studying English, history, and geography. If we didn't finish our lessons we stayed after school until we did, and if we were bad (almost never) we got a few whacks on the palms of our hands with a ruler; meanwhile hoping our parents didn't find out, for then we were in for really big trouble. You were expected to mind the teacher.

I wrote for Granville's Country Caller about real education then as compared to what passes for it now. I expected the sky to fall on my head! However, Mr. Everett

Rockwell, recently retired principal of the Granville Consolidated School, came and told me how much he enjoyed the piece and that he agreed with much of it. I was flattered as I valued his opinion. If we hear enough about what is lacking in today's education, the politicians may get around to doing something constructive about it yet. For my descendants' sake I hope so!





## Snow Fantasy

*The wind blows fierce and chill outside  
As I in downy robe  
Snuggle closer in the night,  
My hands and feet are cold.  
Odd I cannot sleep-  
The hour is late, and yet-  
My heart soars with the wind  
And I cannot forget  
The bond that grew today,  
As we like children ran-  
Through snowdrift hills-  
Not unlike a Fairyland.  
We came upon a forest  
That was laden down with snow,  
It's shelter seemed inviting-  
The wind ne'er ceased to blow.  
'Twas quiet in this place we'd found  
A shelter from the storm-  
That was fast and sure approaching,*

Holly A. Aucoin

*My hand in his grew warm.  
Our laughing then subsided  
As we stood beneath the timber.  
His eyes held mine in silence-  
The memory still lingers.  
His kiss came long and tender-  
As we in warm embrace,  
First tasted our desire  
In that enchanted place.  
Near the edge of that dark forest-  
On the path made coming in,  
We built ourselves a snowman-  
To guard "our" spot within.  
Alone tonight I sit and stare  
Into flickering flames of light.  
Our snowman waits alone out there-  
I should be with them tonight.*



Dr. John A. Huffmire 1924

# The Life and Times of John A. Huffmire, M. D.

*Written by Grace M. Wheeler  
(From an Interview with Mrs. John Huffmire)*

My story begins on September 16, 1900 in Schenectady, New York when a son was born to Aaron And Margaret (Buckley) Huffmire. He was one of seven children and was named John Alvin Huffmire.

John attended public schools in Schenectady after which he graduated from Union College. In June of 1924 he graduated from Middlesex Medical School and served his internship at St. Francis Hospital, Jersey City, New Jersey. In 1926 he was resident surgeon at St. Joseph's Hospital in Paterson, New Jersey. Still feeling that he had much more to learn in his chosen field, he took post-graduate classes at Cook County Hospital in Chicago, Lakeside Clinic at Cleveland, Elting Clinic in Albany, Babcock Clinic in Philadelphia, Lahey Clinic in Boston, and Harper Hospital in Detroit.

It was while he was serving his residency St. Joseph's Hospital in 1926 that he met and fell in love. Lillian Schaffran was a young student nurse in her last year of school. They met, fell in love, and were married all in the same year. To quote Mrs. Huffmire, "It was a courtship which lasted a life time." When the doctor asked her to marry him, he told her not to give

him an answer right away. He said, it would not be easy, he did not have a job and was not sure where or when he would have one. Even then he had it in the back of his mind that someday he would be a small town family doctor. Not having to think about it, she said "yes." She told him that perhaps sometime for some reason or another she might stop loving him, but she hoped that she would never lose the admiration she felt for him at that moment. Of course, both the love and admiration continued to grow during their lifetime together.

Dr. and Mrs. Huffmire used to drive up Route 20 on their way from Watertown, Massachusetts where they were living when they were first married. They would go through Huntington on their way to visit John's parents in Schenectady. It was during these trips that he fell in love with the small towns along the banks of the Westfield River. On their way back from one of these trips he stopped in Huntington and talked with a Dr. Matzek who had a practice there at that time. Dr. Matzek encouraged him to open a small office in town. He felt there would be work enough to keep him busy.

So in January of 1927 he left his young wife in Watertown telling her he would send for her as soon as possible. He came to Huntington in the dead of winter and opened a small office up stairs in the Regas Block on Route 20. The first day he made \$25 which to him seemed like big money. Most of this he sent to his wife along with a note telling her to get herself something to eat.

He stayed at the Regas Block for about six months. He was 27 years old and eight thousand dollars in debt, but felt he was doing well enough to send for his wife.

Their first home together was in the Besaw house on East Main Street (today the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Norton). He had two rooms for his office and lived in the rest of the apartment. It was here that their son James was born. They stayed there for about six years. It was during this time that things began to look up for the young doctor. He was accepted on the staff of Noble Hospital in 1927 and later became Chief of Surgery there. He opened another office in Chester, seven miles west of Huntington. He had office hours there several days a week. In 1928 he was asked to serve as school physician for the local school union which was made up of several small hill towns. The same year he was appointed a member of the Board of Health. He held both posts for nearly fifty years. The Boston and Albany division of the New York Central Railroad appointed him their surgeon in 1928. In 1930 he was appointed Medical Examiner for Hampshire County and was sworn into office by Mayor Curley of Boston. He held this post until the time of his death.

When asked what it was like being the wife of a small town country doctor, Mrs. Huffmire said, "It was very lonely and it took many years to adjust to living in Huntington." Although she was a grad-

uate registered nurse, she had never received a pay check. She often helped the doctor with his cases. Many times she would patch up accident cases and send them on their way to the hospital, where the doctor would be waiting for them. He always trusted her judgement. Many times she would go out with him to deliver babies. One time while he was in Blandford delivering a baby, she was called across the street from their home and delivered a baby all by herself. She has since forgotten the name of the child. Another local woman who went on cases was Goldie Dupelle. She would often stay and take care of the mother and baby until the mother was able to take over.

When the doctor first came to town he was driving a 1926 car that had belonged to one of his sisters. During the cold months, every time he stopped the car for more than a few minutes he would have to drain the radiator. When he was ready to go on the road again he would have to fill the radiator and crank the car to get it going. Many times he would leave to make house calls in sub-zero temperatures and blinding snow storms. He would go to Blandford, Middlefield, Chester, Worthington, Russell and even parts of Becket. He would often times drive as far as possible and then someone would pick him up with a horse and sleigh and take him the rest of the way. Of course, there were times he would walk into farms on some of the back roads. After the snow, came the mud season which was almost as hard to cope with. All this time Mrs. Huffmire was at home worrying about her husband. When he returned, he told her very little except that he had been making house calls.

The doctor became a familiar sight in his racoon coat and turned up hat from about the first of November till the first of April.



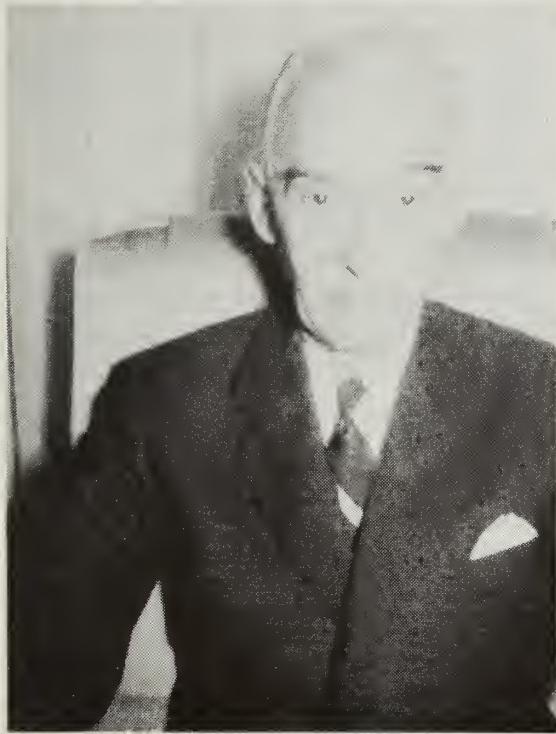
Dr. Huffmire  
and friend  
October 1925



Dr. Huffmire and  
son James 1930



September 1946



September 1957



April 11, 1970  
Dr. Huffmire

When I asked Mrs. Huffmire how long he had worn that coat, her reply was, "He wore that old coat till it had kittens." After he had worn one out and she was talking him into something with a little more style, a good friend in Pittsfield gave him another almost like the first and he wore that one until about the middle 1950's.

The doctor was paid for his services in many unusual ways. One time he received payment of two beagle puppies; he kept one and gave the other to his cousin. Other forms of payment were kittens, vegetables, eggs, butter, cream, and fresh meat when people butchered. He loved the fresh bacon, something they had never eaten until they moved to Huntington. He started out charging \$1 for office calls and for many years he charged \$2. At the time of his death he was charging \$5 for office calls and \$7 for house calls. Many times when he knew the people were down on their luck or out of work he would not charge them anything.

During his life time he delivered about 3,000 babies, 600 of which he delivered during the last ten years he was in practice. During the forties and fifties he charged \$50 to deliver a baby and this took care of both baby and mother until the baby was 6 weeks old. In later years he went up to \$75 and may have gotten as high as \$125, although Mrs. Huffmire was not sure of this. Back when he used to deliver babies at home the fee was usually set at whatever they could afford to pay.

When I asked Mrs. Huffmire if there was any one case that stood out in her mind she related the following to me. Mrs. Walkinshaw of Russell had injured her arm and had been told by several other doctors that it would have to come off. She came to Dr. Huffmire and after he examined it he told her, "If you can bear all the pain you have to endure, I think I can save that arm." Mrs. Huffmire remem-

bered the arm being so bad that there were maggots in the wound. He operated and saved her arm and she lived for many years after. He was always very proud of this accomplishment. Many people will remember Mrs. Walkinshaw for the wonderful rolls, pies, and cakes she used to bake and sell. At this point Mrs. Huffmire made mention of the many dedicated women who worked for the doctor during his fifty years of practice. They were Mary Johnson, R.N., Agnes Pavilica, Rita Gobeille, Carol Kyle, Eunice Coons Riley Shedd and the last one who was with him for many years, and stayed on for some months after his death, Mrs. Pauline Gobeille.

The doctor took much interest in the towns that provided him with his living. He was an original investor, founder, and director of Texon, Inc., leather goods manufacturer based in Russell, with a plant in South Hadley Falls. He was a director of the Westfield River Paper Company, Courtland Grinding Wheel Company of Chester, Hamilton Emery of Chester, and past president of the Chester Cooperative Bank.

Back in 1949 the graduating class of Huntington High School dedicated their year book to him. The reason was that he had delivered all nine members of the class and had cared for them through all their childhood years. Mrs. Huffmire recalls that he was very put out with her when he found they had called and she had set up an appointment for a photographer to come and take his picture. She told him, you should be honored to think they thought enough of you to do this while you were living. Most times when a book is dedicated to someone, the picture has a black border around it. The air was blue for a few days but he calmed down and let them take his picture. He was quite pleased with the book when it came out.

As for vacations, there weren't many. Their first real vacation was a cruise they took in the late 1960's with Dr. and Mrs. Mills. Before that the only vacations they had were a few days here and there usually planned around the obstetrical date book.

The Huffmires spent nearly all of their life in Huntington in their house on East Main Street which they purchased from Lawyer Hardy in the early 1930's after spending six years in the Besaw house which was just two houses up the street. This is where their son James was raised. It was home to Mrs. Huffmire even for a few years after the doctor passed away.

Besides their son, they had four granddaughters and a grandson Steven who was killed when hit by an automobile in the late 1960's.

Dr. Huffmire continued to make house calls right up until about a week before his death. Mrs. Huffmire remembers driving him around just three days before he entered the hospital for the last time. She protested, but he won out. They called on two patients and the third was not at home. Dr. Huffmire passed away on April 30, 1976 and was mourned by all who loved him.

I am sure there are many like myself who will always miss this gruff but gentle man, his smile, the twinkle in his eye, and the strong and gentle touch of his hand.

(Editor's note: Letter printed in the *Westfield Evening News* October 1971.)

Dear Dr. Huffmire,

I'm writing to you to try and put into words a few personal thoughts of a thankful patient, wife and mother. Perhaps things that even you have forgotten.

Like the summer one of my boys broke both arms and when the casts were removed, was reluctant about using his hands. When he showed interest in learning to play the guitar, you discouraged that idea but suggested, instead, that he try the accordian.

That advice not only proved to be just the therapy needed for his arms and hands, but helped to put him through college, and is now helping him to support a wife while he furthers his education.

Or the day my other son was playing with friends after school and pierced his eye with a stick. Into the patient-filled office we rushed where you saw him immediately. Today he doesn't even have a scar from an accident that could have meant the loss of an eye.

Or my daughter's mis-hap of a broken nose when hit by a baseball on the day her oldest brother was graduating from high school. You were at the hospital, told us to bring her down where you cleaned, stitched and calmed her, sent her home and she slept through the whole proceedings.

Or my waking up one morning so ill to learn from you I had the measles at the age of 36!

Or the poison ivy contracted by my daughter that became infected and went into her blood stream. Two weeks later the rash was gone and so was the infection.

Or the Sunday morning I had to be rushed back to the hospital (I had returned the day before from an operation) and found you there waiting for me.

These are just a few of a long list of times we've called on you, doctor, not only for medical treatment but for advice and counseling as well.

What I want to say is "thank you." Thank you for being there at odd hours, holidays, Sundays -- morning, noon and night. And if you could give so much to a family of five, how much more you must give to families much larger, or your many patients with more problems, incidents and accidents.

From all of us, very selfishly, we thank God you are "our doctor."

A very grateful patient,  
Celia Burbank  
Huntington



# Requiem for a Physician

*The following tribute to Dr. John A. Huffmire was written by Dr. Joseph T. Bagamary.*

Pity for the freshman, who is confused and dwarfed  
by the massive extent of knowledge;  
which he never really hopes to encompass.  
How mystical to him appears the upperclassmen,  
who has progressed so it seems, to an understanding  
of such a nebulous array of concepts.  
But what of the upperclassmen who again  
becomes subservient to the role of freshman,  
as he proceeds to advance his state of mental competence?  
And so the role and status from low to high to low again --  
reiterate in boring complexity -- as one advances  
from grade to college, to medical school.  
But does it stop upon attainment,  
of such an omnipotent degree as M.D.?  
Or does the mighty stature of the doctor also bend,  
amid the ever increasing weight of new found knowledge?  
Where does the complexity end?  
Or is it that the resolving power  
of man's crude tools, fail to show  
the simplicity of nature's facade?  
And what becomes of our theories, hypothesis,  
laws and beliefs;  
When research explodes into areas which  
only yesterday were consideread life's guidelines.  
Thus the maturing upperclassman must continue to pursue his goal;  
Realizing that the beauty of any perfection  
is stained and ultimately changed  
by the evolution of data once considered conflicting  
and irrelevant.  
Finally, with a quiet hush of thanksgiving  
he must accept the shroud of death!  
For only then, will the facade of nature  
open to him;  
And the nebulous array of knowledge  
all at once appears clear.  
For he will have learned to accept the role  
of freshman  
Within the mystical realm of the Almighty Upperclassman.

# Stone Walls Index

## Volumes 6 - 9

*compiled by Donna Drew*

An index of the first five volumes of *Stone Walls* appeared in the summer 1980 issue. This is an index of the next four volumes.

The issues are packed with information, so in the interest of conserving space cross-referencing is again limited. If you're looking for a specific topic and can't find it, try looking under related categories.

Some subject entries refer to main topics of articles; others refer to small details.

There is an emphasis on places and people. All towns are in Massachusetts unless otherwise noted. Since index space is limited, in articles containing long lists of names or vague references to people not every name is indexed.

Topics with unindexed names of people are: Montgomery bicentennial articles (Su80:2; 8; 22), Middlefield in the Civil War (W81:28), school and library committees in Blandford (S81:27), Montgomery quilters (Su81:2), Levi Watson Dimock's diary (W82:17, S82:10, Su82:5, F82:22), Worthington roads (S82:30), and World War I heroes of Chester (W83:13). The many names listed in genealogical queries are not indexed either (see "genealogy" in subject index for page numbers).

Not all poems are listed under subjects,

but all are listed in the authors and poets section.

Unfortunately, much of the art work is unsigned and therefore cannot be indexed in the artists and photographers section.

Page numbers refer to the first page of the article in which the entry is mentioned, not necessarily the exact page on which the entry is mentioned.

To understand the index it is helpful to note the following:

"W81" refers to the winter 1980-1981 issue

"W82" refers to the winter 1981-1982 issue

"W83" refers to the winter 1982-1983 issue

"W84" refers to the winter 1984 issue, of course

"S" refers to a spring issue

"Su" refers to a summer issue

"F" refers to a fall issue

"ifc" means inside front cover

We hope this index will be a useful research tool. If you are missing back issues of the magazine, most are available for \$2.00 plus \$.80 postage from *Stone Walls*, Box 85, Huntington, MA 01050.

Special thanks to Clara Archambault for once again transferring this seemingly endless list of letters and numbers from index cards to typewritten pages.



## Subject Index

Adams, Carrie W81:16  
 Agawam F83:10  
     Feeding Hills S83:13  
 Agawam River S83:13, F83:10  
 Agricultural Hall, Blandford F82:5, W83:11, S83:  
     :13  
 Airplane W84:22  
 Albro, Audrea V. Su80:15  
 Alcohol and distilleries Su80:2, Su82:22, F82:6:  
     14, W84:8  
 Alcorn, Dr. W84:28  
 Alden, Solomon W83:12  
 Alderman, Harold Elwood W84:3  
 Alderman, Mr. of Worthington Su81:32  
 Alderman Farm S80:36  
 Aldrich, Bernie S80:23, F80:23  
 Alger, Calla Lilla; James; Sarah Su83:15  
 Allen, Ed F80:12  
 Allen, Irving S80:36  
 Allis, William Su82:10  
 Allison, Mary Pardee F83:22  
 Allyn, David and Delia Su80:22;25, Su81:2  
 Allyn, Lewis B. Su80:15, W81:29  
 Alquat (chief of Woronoak Tribe) Su80:2  
 Alvord, Deputy Sheriff Edwin H. W81:16  
 American Legion Su80:15  
 Amherst Su83:33  
 Animals birds, reptiles S80:12;23, Su80:12, F80:22:  
     S81:35, Su81:11;19;37, W82:35, S82:28;36, Su82:  
     25, F82:11;33(poem),W83:11;35;36, S83:11, F83:  
     10, F84:20, W84:15;28  
 Antique shows Su83:15  
 Apples F82:6

Architecture S80:6;17;19, Su80:22, Su81:13, F82:14,  
     W83:8;22, F83:31, W84:10;15  
 Arnold, Michael Su81:8  
 Ashfield S80:31  
 Ashley, Rev. Samuel D.; Charles W81:4, Su83:8  
 Ashmun, Justus F82:2  
 Atherton, Major Humphrey Su80:2  
 Atkinson, John S83:23  
 Atwater, Rev. Noah W82:9  
 Auburn Su83:15  
 Austin, Mr. of Granville F82:9  
 Austin family of Chester W81:16  
 Avery, Elisha and George Su80:2  
 Avery Ephraim and Susanna and family Su80:  
     2;25  
 Avery, Louise Su82:22  
 Avery, Mary V. W82:9  
 Avery, R. D. F83:33  
 Avery, T. B. S83:6  
 Axes S80:31  
  
 Babbitt axes S80:31  
 Bacon, W. W. F82:14  
 Badger, Rev. Joseph S81:27  
 Baker, Charles W83:22  
 Ball, Charlie S80:12;32  
 Ballentine, Rev. John Su80:2  
 Ballou Company W81:22  
 Barnard, E. G. F83:36  
 Barns, Brother S83:6 F83:33  
 Barrett, Daniel Su80:1:2  
 Barrett, Mary W81:37

- Bartholomew, Adeline S83:6  
 Bartholomew, S. A. W83:11  
 Bartlett, Elsie W82:13  
 Bartlett, Ephriam Tilson; Salome Tower; Flora Louise; and family W83:18  
 Bartlett, Mrs. Guy; Horace Franklin W84:22  
 Bartlett Livingstone and family S83:23  
 Bartlett, Marjori S81:2  
 Bartlett, Gen. William W81:34  
 Baseball F80:23, F83:31  
 Basketry W81:22, S82:30, S83:22  
 Bassett, Joel S83:23  
 Bates, Clarence W. F82:5  
 Bates, Florence F83:22  
 Bates, Sen. Issac Chapman F82:9  
 Bates, Mildred F83:3  
 Bates, Miss of Granville , F82:9  
 Battles, Mary W83:13  
 Baxter, Ebenezer W82:9  
 Bear Den Brook Su80:26, F80:23  
 Beard, Daniel S. W83:8  
 Becket S80:23, F80:14, W81:22, F81:30, Su83:30, W84:2:33  
 Belcher, Ruth W84:3  
 Bell, George S. S83:2  
 Bell, John L. W81:28  
 Bell Choir Su83:10  
 Bennet, E.W. F82:2  
 Berries F80:23, W81:24, S81:9; 15, W83:8, F83:31  
 Best, Henry W84:34  
 Bicentennial Su80: Montgomery Bicentennial Issue. Su81:2, S83:2, W84:ifc  
 Bicknell, L.E. S83:13  
 Biggs, George Su83:10  
 Biggs, Waity Maria Su83:22  
 Bird, Fred and family S80:12  
 Bishop, Deacon Jesse S81:27  
 Black, Jane S81:27  
 Black Brook S80:23, F80:23  
 Blacks W81:28, Su81:37, W82:9  
 Blair, W.H.H. F82:5  
 Blacksmiths, forges Su82:12, S83:22;23, Su83:33, W84:28  
 Blanchard, Cora Su83:27  
 Blanchard, Walter W83:17  
 Blandford S80:10;23;28, F80:14;18;23, W81:22, S81:22;27;36. Su81:ifc;20:22, F81:7;24, Su82:12;22;25, F82:2;5, W83:11;22, S83:13;22;36, Su83:8;22, F83:31;36, W84:3;8;15;28  
 Blandford Monthly (excerpt) W81:27  
 Bliss, A. of Springfield S83:15  
 Bliss, Mr. of Blandford S83:22  
 Blodgett, Gertrude W84:15  
 Boies, John and family S81:27  
 Boies, William; Samuel; Reuben S81:27  
 Boise, Enos F82:2;5  
 Boise, Watson E. Su82:24  
 Bolton, James W83:22  
 Bossidy, Judge Bart W83:13  
 Bosworth, Deborah W81:37  
 Bosworth, Estin S83:6  
 Bosworth, R.E. Su80:15  
 Bosworth, Zadock Su80:2;25  
 Bosworth Drum Corps Su80:15, Su81:2, Su83:8  
 Bowden, Rev. H.M. F83:18  
 Bowers, Leon F82:2  
 Brace, Chester and Clarissa Su80:2, S83:6  
 Brace, Julia F80:28  
 Brant, John; Hannah; Tracey Su80:2  
 Breezy Hill Farm W84:15  
 Brennan, John W81:4  
 Bridgeman, Rev. Lewis W81:28  
 Bridges S80:32;34, F80:14;18, S81:22;36, Su81:36, W82:4, S82:24;33, Su82:36, F82:28, S83:13;23, Su83:8;33, F83:10, W84:2  
 Bridgeman, Laura F80:28  
 Brimmer, Martin F82:9  
 Britt, Raymond W84:22  
 Broadacres W84:15  
 Brockett, Ely and family S81:27  
 Brodeur, C.A. Su80:15  
 Bronson Brook S80:17  
 Broom corn Su83:33  
 Brown, Benjamin P. Su83:8  
 Brown, 'Hog-skinner' S80:31  
 Brown, John W81:28  
 Bruch, Barlow and Henry (Drum makers) W84:8  
 Bryant, Dr. F82:2  
 Bryant Homestead W83:18, F83:3  
 Buffington, Maj. Samuel; Lucy W83:36  
 Burr, Edwin S. F80:12  
 Burr, Franklin and family W84:22  
 Burt, James S83:15  
 Buynicki, Benjamin W83:8  
 Caffrey, Will W81:4  
 Camp, Frona Su80:8  
 Camp, Isaac and Mary and family Su81:2  
 Camping F80:23  
 Cannon, Blanche and family F81:7, S82:22  
 Cannon, Nathan; Capt Israel S81:27  
 Capen, Arthur Granville and family F81:18  
 Cardboards S80:28  
 Carpenter family of Granville F82:14  
 Carpet bags F80:12

- Carpowitz, Joe W82:35  
 Carrington, Charles W81:4, F81:30, W83:11  
 Carrington, Charles and Willis S80:23  
 Caves F81:11:28, Su82:22, S83:32:34  
 Cemeteries and graves S80:26, Su80:2:25, Su81:2:  
     37, F81:18, W82:9, F82:16, S83:28, W84:10  
 Centennial S83:2, Su83:8  
 Chaffee, T.S. F82:2  
 Chaffrey, Jim W81:4  
 Chalmers, Edith Su83:30  
 Chamberlain, "Mother" W81:4  
 Chandler, John W83:22  
 Chapin, A.P. F82:2  
 Chapin, Rev. Charles Su80:15  
 Chapin, Rev. Joel and Nabby S80:26  
 Chapman, Abner W84:33  
 Chapman, Avery S83:6  
 Chapman, Elbert and family Su80:2, Su81:2  
 Chapman, Elisha Su80:22  
 Chapman Tavern Su80:20  
 Charlemont W83:28  
 Cheeseman, Uriah Frank W81:28  
 Cheetham, Henry F83:22  
 Cheney, George S83:23  
 Chester S80:28;34;36;37, F80:14, W81:9;16:27,  
     S81:22, Su81:13;32;37, F81:24;30, S82:24, Su82:  
     22, F82:6;32 (poem), W83:8;11;13;17;22;31, S83:  
     2;13, Su83:4;27;30;33;37, F83:10;36, W84;ifc:2;  
     8;10;28  
 Chester factories F80:14, S81:22  
 Dayville W83:31  
 Littleville F80:2, W83:31  
 Chesterfield S80:37, F80:12, S82:30, W83:22,  
     F83:22  
     W. Chesterfield S80:17;26, S82:30  
 Chicopee S80:37  
 Chilson, Lizzie S80:9  
 Christmas W83:11  
 Christmas trees F83:7  
 Church, Dr. Jefferson and family W81:28  
 Church, Moses S83:15  
 Church, Myron L. S83:2  
 Church family of Middlefield W81:4  
 Churches Su80:2 (Montgomery); 12 (Mon-  
     tgomery); 25(Montgomery),F80:28(Granville),  
     W81:4 (Russell); 28 (Middlefield). S81:27  
     (Blandford); 36 Russell). Su81:2 (Mont-  
     gomery); 13 (Chester); 36 (Cummington); 37  
     (Chester),F81:18 (Worthington), W82:9 (West-  
     field), S82:24 (Blandford); 30 (Worthington),  
     Su82:22 (Chester), W83:2 (Cummington); 11  
     (Blandford), S83:6 (Montgomery); 13 (Hill  
     Towns); 22 (Blandford); 32 (Hadley), Su83:8  
     (Worthington); 10 (Westfield); 27 (Chester); 30  
     (Bancroft); 33 (Montgomery), F83:18 (Middle-  
     field), W84:8 (Chester, Blandford); 10 (Chester);  
     28 (Blandford)  
 Churchill, Elijah S83:36  
 Cider F82:6, F83:3  
 Civil War S80:34, F80:2, W81:4;28;30;34, Su81:  
     13;30, Su82:10, S83:6, Su83:22, W84:10  
 Clairvoyance Su83:22  
 Clapp, Captain Roger Su80:2  
 Clark, Ansel F82:9  
 Clark, Charles F82:5  
 Clark, Rev. Edward W81:28  
 Clark, John F. Su80:15  
 Clark, Katie F80:2  
 Clark, Ledru F80:23  
 Clark, Nelson; Louisa Pomeroy; and family S83:6,  
     F83:33  
 Clark, Schuyler and family S80:35, S83:6  
 Clark family of Montgomery Su80:2;25  
 Clarke, Aaron S81:27  
 Clifton, Delia and Fred W82:9  
 Cline, Mr. of Westfield Su83:30  
 Clothesline F82:12  
 Cobb, Henry F83:36  
 Cockrane, Mr. and Mrs. David and family  
     W84:22  
 Cochran, John S81:27  
 Cole, Dorothy F83:22  
 Cole, Imogene S81:2  
 Cole, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Su80:15  
 Columbia Hall, Westfield Su82:12  
 Cone, George N. S83:13  
 Connecticut Su80:2, S81:36, F81:18, Su83:15;22,  
     F83:18, W84:33  
 Connecticut River F81:28, Su82:12, S83:23,  
     F83:10;18  
 Conwell, Russell and Jennie; Hattie Su82:10  
 Cook, Ethel and Frank W84:15  
 Cooking; cooks; recipes Su80:22, F80:20, W81:2,  
     F81:8, S82:16, W83:18, Su83:4;27  
 Cooley, James F82:14  
 Cooley, Timothy M. F82:9  
 Cooney, John E. W83:13  
 Cooper family of Worthington S82:34  
 Coue, Dr. Su83:17  
 Counterfeiting F81:11, Su82:22  
 Cowdry, Henry W83:11  
 Cowell, Stanley and Roberta and family F82:28  
 Cowles, Glenn B. W82:4  
 Craig, Paul Frederick W84:3  
 Crean, Judy Su80:8  
 Criminals S80:36, F80:23, W81:16, F81:11, Su82:

- 22, W83:11, F83:36  
 Cromwell, Oliver S83:32  
 Cross, David Su82:22  
 Cross, Edith C. W81:27  
 Cudworth, Charlie S80:33  
 Culver, John W. W81:4  
 Cummington S80:12;32;33;35, S80:2, Su81:36,  
     F81:22;24, S82:22, F82:16;28, W83:2;8;11;18;  
     28;36, S83:13, Su83:8, F83:3;22;36  
     Swift River S81:2, F81:28  
 Cunningham, John W83:36  
 Cushman, Milo E. and Marrian Su81:2  
  
 Dalton S 80:32;35, F80:23, W81:34  
 Dalton, Fred S82:23  
 Damon, Libeon Thrasher S 82:30  
 Dams S80:28, S81:36, W83:31, S83:23;27 (poem),  
     Su83:8  
 Daniel Wolcott Su81:8  
 Daniels, Mary Ann and family Su81:2  
 D'Astous, Zenon F82:18  
 Davenport, Benjamin W83:36  
 Davis, Jettie W81:27  
 Dawson, Prof. George E. W84:10  
 Day, S.S. F82:2  
 Deane Building, Blandford S81:27  
 Decoteau, Ernest "Pop" Su81:34  
 Dempsey, John W81:4  
 DeWitt, E.A. W83:11, S83:13  
 DeWolf, DeWitt Clinton Su81:13, W83:13,  
     W84:10  
 DeWolf, Oscar Su81:13, S83:2, W84:10  
 DeWolf, Thaddeus Kingsley and Cornelia and  
     family Su81:13, S83:2, F83:36, W84:10  
 Diaries W81:34, Su81:8;20, W82:17, S82:10,  
     Su82:5;36, S83:6;23, F83:31  
 Dickerman, Landlord E.W. Su83:8, F83:36,  
     W84:8  
 Dickinson, E.D. W83:8  
 Dickinson, Deacon Lester F82:14  
 Dickson, Clifford and Lyman F80:23  
 Dimock, Levi Watson and family W82:17, S82:10,  
     Su82:5, F82:22  
 Dinosaurs F81:28  
 Dixwell, Mr. S83:32  
 Doten, Fidelia Wright and family F82:16  
 Doten, Louise F81:22, S82:22  
 Drew, Harry E. W83:28  
 Drovers F82:14  
 Drum factory W83:11, W84:8  
 Dunham, Esther S80:26  
 Durgin, Dr. Lawrence F83:22  
 Dwight, Josiah W83:22  
  
 Dwyer, Joe F80:23  
  
 Eastern States Exposition S80:10, F83:10  
 Easthampton F81:24;28, S83:23, Su83:33  
 Eaton, Walter Prichard W83:28  
 Elder, May W84:10  
 Electricity W83:2, F83:10  
 Elton, Paul Su80:15  
 Ely, Joseph Buell W82:9, W83:13  
 Emerson, Rev. S81:27  
 Enfield F81:18  
 Entertainment S80:12, W81:4;24, Su81:8, S82:16,  
     Su82:12,  
     F82:18, W83:6;11, W84:10  
 Eric Canal W84:33  
  
 Factory Brook F80:14, W81:4, S83:2  
 Falley, Richard Su80:2  
 Farmer's Market Su82:2  
 Farming and home industries S80:12, Su80:25,  
     F80:23,  
     W81:2;4;24, S81:27;35;36, Su81:2;8;11;13, F81:  
     8;22,  
     W82:8 (poem); 17, S82:10;16;28, Su82:2;12,  
     F82:6;14;16, W83:2;6;11;22;31, S83:2;6;13;15;22,  
     Su83:8;33, F83:3;31;33;36, W84:15;28  
 Farmland F81:30  
 Farnham, Clayton Su81:2  
 Fashion S80:2, W81:4, Su82:12, W83:2;18, S83:15  
 Fell, Barry W81:27  
 Fences F81:10  
 Fiction W82:22;25;30  
 Fires and firefighting S80:12, Su80:15, F82:2;28,  
     W83:8;28, S83:6;13;36, W84:10;28  
 Fish, Merey W84:28  
 Fishing S80:23, F80:23, S82:16;33, Su83:8  
 Fisk, Eva W83:13  
 Fisk, Otho F82:6  
 Fitch, Amos G. W82:9  
 Floods S83:23;27, F83:10  
 Fleming, Bernard Su83:30  
 Flowers Su80:12, S81:9, Su81:2, F81:2;3;4;5,  
     S82:16  
 Foote, Fanny W82:9  
 Foote, Flora E. F80:2  
 Foote, Mary E. (Mrs. Frank) Su81:13, W84:10  
 "Footprints in Montgomery" Su82:11  
 Forests Su81:28, W83:22  
 Forgea, Dennis F82:28  
 Fortune, Lewis C. and family Su80:15  
 Fossils F81:28  
 Four-H S80:12, Su80:8, S81:2, Su81:2, F83:10  
 Fourth of July Su81:22 (poem), Su83:8

- Fowler, George "Bud" W83:8  
 Fowler, Marjorie and Frances Su83:27  
 Fowler, Samuel Su83:8  
 Freeman, Dr. Eaton F83:22  
 French and Indian War Su80:2  
 Frisbie, Joe W84:15  
 Frisbie, Nelson W81:2;24  
 Frost, George Washington and family Su83:22  
 Fuller, Joseph and Priscilla Su80:2  
 Fuller, Zebulon W83:22  
 Furs W81:24, S83:18
- Gagnon, William W84:22  
 Gamel, James W81:16  
 Gamwell, Sarah DeWolf W84:10  
 Gardening S81:9, F81:2, Su82:2  
 Gardner, Charles M. W81:4  
 Gardner, Electa Miller and family S80:37,  
     Su82:36  
 Gaylord, Mary Lyman W82:9  
 Genealogical Queries W82:2, S82:37, Su82:35,  
     F82:36, W83:37, S83:35, Su83:36, F83:37,  
     W84:37
- Genesis House Su83:4  
 Geology Su80:25, F81:24;28, W83:22  
 Germans F80:19  
 Gibbons, J.M. W84:8  
 Gibbons, Orlin Su81:8  
 Gibbs, Ernest H.; Dr. V.L. Su83:8  
 Gibbs, Frank Nelson; Olive; Robert; Donald;  
     Amy; Elsie W84:28  
 Gibbs, Lafayette S81:27  
 Gibbs, Mr., of Blandford S83:22  
 Gillett, Frederick Huntington W82:9  
 Gilman, Miss of Hartland F82:9  
 Glendale Falls F82:16, S83:36  
 Glendale Farm, Middlefield F82:16, S83:36  
 Glidden, Nathaniel S82:30  
 Goffe, Mr. of Montgomery S83:32  
 Goldsmith, Barbara D. F83:3  
 Goodrich, A.W. F83:36  
 Goshen S80:26, S81:2, F81:28, W82:35  
 Gough, John B. F82:2  
 Granby F81:28  
 Grange W81:4, Su81:2, F81:18, F82:28  
 Granger, Daisy W84:22  
 Granville (Bedford Plantation) F80:28, W81:2;  
     24;37, Su81:8, F81:33, S82:16, Su82:10;22,  
     F82:9;14, W83:11;28, S83:13;15;22;34, Su83:8,  
     F83:10;36, W84:8  
     West Granville Su81:30, W83:6  
 Granville, Ohio F80:28, W81:37  
 Graves, Collins S83:23
- Great Barrington F80:14, F83:31  
 Great Depression S81:2  
 Greenfield S83:32, W84:34  
 Greylock, Woronoco Indian chief Su81:32  
 Grist Mills S80:17, Su80:2, F80:18, S82:6;8, Su82:  
     12, S83:6;23  
 Gunn, Roger S80:17  
 Guns Su80:2, W81:4  
 Guesetti, Mrs. Joseph W82:4  
 Guthrie Arlo F83:22  
 Gypsy moths S81:18
- Hadley F81:28, S83:32;34, Su83:33, F83:10  
 Hale, Moses W83:22  
 Haley, John W83:13  
 Hall, Andrew; Eunice; William Su81:2  
 Hall, Bill Su80:12, Su81:2  
 Hall, Grace Su81:2  
 Hall, Lucy Su81:2  
 Halloween F80:23, F82:34  
 Hamilton, Augustine S83:13  
 Hamlen, Therone; Esther F83:3  
 Hampshire Gazette (excerpt) F82:28, W83:36,  
     F83:3  
 Hand, Lt. Col. Stanley I. Su80:16  
 Hardy, Dr. W83:11  
 Harger, George S. Su81:30  
 Harris, Ray L. W83:13  
 Hart, Elmer and Edna Su83:22  
 Harvey, Mr. of Granville S83:15  
 Harwood, Nathan A. S83:13  
 Haskins, Harry; Mary W83:13  
 Haskins, Milo W83:11  
 Hatch, Caroline E. S81:27  
 Hatch, Moses and Lucy Su80:2  
 Hatfield F81:24, W83:22, S83:32, Su83:33  
 Hawkins, Harold Su80:15  
 Hawley, James S83:13  
 Hayden, Charles B. S81:27  
 Hayden, Elizur B. and Jennie Su82:10  
 Hayden and Gere Brass Co. and Cotton Mills  
     S83:23  
 Haydenville S83:23  
 Hayes, Hiram Su81:8  
 Hazeltine, Benjamin Prescott III W84:3  
 Healthcare; sickness; doctors; nurses S80:12, F80:  
     28, W81:2;16, S81:15, Su81:13;37, S82:22, F82:28,  
     W83:6;11, S83:15, Su83:17;22, F83:3;22;36,  
     W84:8;10;22;28  
 Healy, Dennison C. W83:11  
 Healy, Frank W84:28  
 Herrick, Reuben Su81:2  
 Higgins, Dr. Frank A. W81:22

- Higgins, Lee W81:22, S83:22  
 Higgins, William C.; Ira W81:22  
 Hiking F81:36, W84:3  
 Hill, C.G. S83:23  
 Hinsdale F80:12;14, W83:18;28, W84:22  
 Hinsdale, Rev. Charles Su83:22  
 Hitchcock, Franklyn W84:22  
 Hitchcock, Luke and Lucy Mirick and family S83:15  
 Hitchcock, May S80:12  
 Hitler, Adolf F80:19  
 Holcomb, Edgar W84:8  
 Holcomb, Warren Rudd and Mary Ann (Bronson) S81:15  
 Holland, Fannie Su82:22  
 Holland, James Su81:37  
 Holmes, Maud C.; George E. F83:18  
 Holyoke S80:37, Su80:8, F81:28, Su82:12, S83:23, Su83:4;22;33  
 Honeybees S80:17  
 Hoosac Tunnel F80:14, W84:34  
 Hopgood, George S. W83:11  
 Hopkins, Mark F82:34  
 Horton, Newell S80:33  
 Housekeeping Su80:22, W81:2;10;24, S81:15, Su81:8, F81:8, F82:12, W83:6;18, F83:3;31, W84:15;28  
 Howes, M.S. S82:22  
 Hrubiec Orchards W83:8  
 Hubbard River S82:16, F83:10  
 Huffmire, Dr. John F83:10;22  
 Hughes, Stephen Su82:22  
 Humason, Don Su83:10  
 Humphrey, Eben and Ruth Su83:8  
 Hunting and Trapping S80:23, Su80:12, F82:5, W84:8;20  
 Huntington S80:23;35, Su80:2;15, F80:12;14, W81:4;16, Su81:11;13;32;36;37, F81:24;36, W82:4;17;35, S82:24, Su82:2;12, F82:6;18;22, W83:11;13;22;31, S83:6;13, Su83:8, F83:22;36, W84:8;33;34  
     Knightville S80:37, Su81:37, S82:30, Su82:25;36  
     Norwich Su80:2, F80:18, Su83:33  
     Norwich Bridge F82:34, Su83:33  
     Norwich Hill W81:9;17, Su81:24, S82:10, Su82:5  
 Huntington, Rev. Su83:8, W84:28  
 Hurricane of 1938 F83:10  
 Huston, Robert; John F82:2  
 Hutchinson, John F83:33  
 Ice W81:9, Su82:12, W83:31, Su83:30  
 Index, Vols. I to V Su80:28  
 India, families from Su81:37  
 Indians Su80:2, W81:22;27, Su81:32;37, F81:24, S82:30, Su82:22, S83:32  
 Industries, early S80:17;23;28, Su80:2;25, F80:18;23, W81:4;22, S81:36, Su81:28, W82:35, S82:6;8, Su82:12, F82:18, W83:6;11, S83:2;6;13;22;23, Su83:8;22;30;33, F83:3;33, W84:8;15;28  
 Inwell S80:34  
 Inns: boarding houses; hotels Su80:22, W81:4, Su81:2, F82:2;14, W83:8, S83:22;36, Su83:30;33, F83:3, W84:8  
 Insects S81:18, Su82:36, Su82:20;21 (poems)  
 Jackson, Evelyn F83:3  
 Jackson, Mr., of Sandisfield F83:10  
 James, David and Robelyn Schrade S82:2  
 Janitus, Mrs., of Russell W84:28  
 Jensen, Evelyn Su82:18  
 JoJo, Billy and Maxie W82:35  
 Jones, George F82:5  
 Jordan, Elijah W81:34  
 Joslyn, Carl F83:22  
 Joy, Dr. Royal F83:3  
 Judges S83:34  
 Kabatchnick, Mr. of Bancroft Su83:30  
 Kagwin, B. F83:33  
 Kagwin, John Su80:25  
 Keefe, James W83:13, S83:13  
 Keep, Rev. John S81:27  
 Kelso, Beth Su83:27  
 Kelso, E. W81:4  
 Kelso, Homer H. and family Su80:15  
 Kenney, J.C. F83:36  
 Keough, Annie S81:15  
 King Charles I and King Charles II S83:32  
 King Philip S83:32  
 King, Edward Su83:8  
 King, Gamaliel and Priscilla Su80:2  
 Kingman, Levi F83:3  
 Kinne, Thomas and Hannah and family S82:30  
 Kites family of Crescent Mills F80:23, W81:4  
 Klondike manor W83:8  
 Knapp, A.W. S83:8  
 Kneil, Arthur S. F82:5  
 Kneil, Mrs. John H. Su80:15  
 Kneller, Dr. Leighton F83:22  
 Knittle, Fred; Sadie W84:15  
 Knox, John; Samuel S81:27  
 Labrie, Jeannette and Roland F83:3  
 Ladd, Joseph M. S81:27  
 Lakes; Ponds; reservoirs S80:23 (Norwich).

- Su80:12 (Old Pond); 19 (Hampton); 25 (Westfield), F80:23 (Blandford), W81:4 (Crescent Mills); 9 (Huntington), S81:36 (Woronoco), Su81:2 (Sand Spring, Montgomery), F81:11 (Westfield); 18 (Quabbin); 28 (Hadley, Springfield), W83:31 (Littleville), S83:22 (Blandford); 23 (Williamsburg), Su83:8 (Norwich)  
 Lambing S82:28  
 Landon, G.W.I. F83:18  
 Laine, Anna W83:3  
 Lathrop, Caroline W84:3  
 Lathrop, E.H. W84:8  
 Layton, Rev. U.H. W83:13  
 Leatherworking S80:2, W83:36  
 Lee F80:14, W81:34, F81:30, Su82:12, W83:13, S83:13  
 Lee, Gideon and Lucy Buffington; Samuel W83:36  
 Lee, Sgt. Robert G. W84:22  
 Legends S83:32  
 Lent, Dr. W84:22  
 Leslie, J. Frank and Libbie S80:12  
 Lewis, Charles M. F82:2  
 Libardi, Carl S80:34  
 Lightning W83:2:22  
 Libraries S81:27 (Blandford), Su81:2 (Montgomery); 13 (Chester), F81:18 (Worthington); 36 (Westfield), Su82:22, F82:9 (Granville), W84:10 (Chester)  
 Lincoln, Abraham W81:30, S83:6  
 Lindgren, Evert and Oscar W84:3  
 Lindsay, John and family W84:33  
 Lindsley, Dep. Sheriff W84:8  
 Little River S82:30, Su82:30, Su82:12  
 Littlefield, Sarah S80:26  
 Livermore, Alice M. W84:10  
 Lloyd, Robert S81:27  
 Lloyd, William P. and family S81:30  
 Lockwood, Rev. J.H. S83:13  
 Longmeadow S83:32  
 Loomis, Clarissa W82:9  
 Loring, Mr. of Blandford W84:28  
 Loud, Robert S83:23  
 Lovell, D.W. S83:13  
 Lucie, B.J. W83:11  
 Lumber; logging S80:19:28, Su80:12:25, W81:22, S81:36, Su81:28, F81:10, W82:35, S82:12, W83:6:8:34 (poem); 35, S83:6, F83:31, W84:15  
 Lyceum Hall, Worthington S81:2, F83:22  
 Lyman, D.E. S82:22  
 Lyman, Gad and Thankful S80:26  
 Lyman, Gladys Su83:27  
 Lyman, Harriet Su81:13  
 Lyman, Rufus; Samuel; Gaius Su83:33  
 Lyman, Capt. William W83:22  
 Lynch, Frederick Su81:2  
 MacDonald, Arthur Irving W84:3  
 Mae, Dr. W83:31  
 Magargal, Raymond F81:18  
 Mail Su80:15, F80:12, W81:2  
 Maine Su80:2  
 Malcolm, David, J. W83:28  
 Mallory, John A.; Andrew Su82:22  
 Maple Sugaring S80:12:17:23, S81:15, S82:28, S83:13, F83:31  
 Marchesi, Joseph W83:11  
 Marshall, Adelbert F82:2  
 Martin, Carmetta S81:2  
 Mason, Howard and family F83:7  
 Mason, Irene Merrill Su83:27  
 McBride, John W81:4  
 McBride, Will F80:23  
 McCann, Roy and Helen F83:22  
 McCarthy, David F. Su80:15  
 McCarthy, Rev. W83:13  
 McDermott, Alice S81:15  
 McElwain's Mills S81:22  
 McGowan, James W81:4  
 McHale, John Su83:4  
 McQuat, Fred and family Su80:15  
 Meacham, Ebenezer W83:22  
 Meacham, Sadie; Eddie Su83:27  
 Memorial Day Su80:16, Su83:22  
 Mensel, Prof. Ernest W84:10  
 Middlefield S80:6:34, F80:14, W81:4:28, Su81:37, F81:22:24, F82:16, W83:8:17:22, S83:2:36:37, Su83:8:17:30, F83:10:18:36, W84:ifc  
 Bancroft Su83:30, F83:10  
 Miller, Herbert; Adra W83:8  
 Miller, Paul W. W83:13  
 Miller, William S82:36, W83:22  
 Milligan, John S80:2  
 Miner family of Blandford S83:22  
 Minor, Officer F83:36  
 Minstrel Shows W81:4  
 Modestow, Dr. John and Nan F83:22  
 Monat, Frank S80:23  
 Montague W84:3  
 Monterey Su82:28  
 Montgomery S80:23:35, Su80:2:8:12:15:19:22:25, F80:23, W81:29:37, S81:9:36:38, Su81:2:37, F81:2:11:24:36, W82:4, S82:24:33, Su82:11:22, W83:22, S83:6:13:32, Su83:8:33, F83:33:36  
 Montgomery Mountain (Mt. Montgomery) Su81:2, F81:2:36

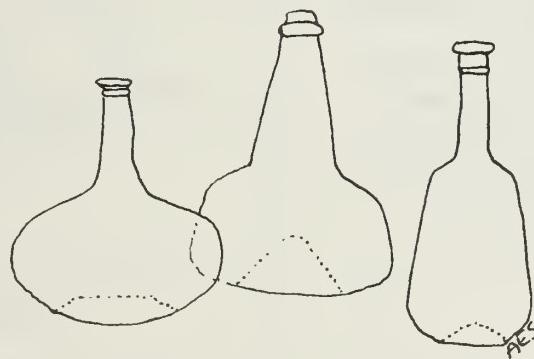
- Montgomery, General Richard Su80:2  
 Moore, Horace; Oseanus; Dwight; A.A. S83:6  
 Moore, Joe Su80:25  
 Moore, Warham; Bell; Oeterlony F83:33  
 Moosemeadow Brook Su80:2;22;26, S81:22  
 Morey, Olive W84:28  
 Morris, A.L. "Gus" W82:4  
 Morris, Daphne F83:3  
 Morris, Walter F83:3  
 Moss, Moses W83:22  
 Moss Hill Tree Farm F83:7  
 Mount Tekoa Su80:2;12;25, S81:22, F81:11, Su82:  
     25, S83:32, F83:36  
 Mount Toby F81:28, W84:3  
 Mount Tom F81:28;36, Su82:25, Su83:33  
 Mountains and hills (Also see specific names)  
     S80:35, Su80:19;22, F80:14;23, W81:4;16, S81:  
     22;36, Su81:2;32;33;37, F81:30, W82:4;13, S82:  
     24;30, F82:33, W83:22, Su83:33, F83:10;18,  
     W84:22  
 Mountain Breeze newspaper Su80:8  
 Mountain House F82:2;5, S83:36  
 Mountain View Hotel F82:2;5, S83:36  
 Murray, John W83:22  
 Murrayfield, Su80:22  
 Museums S80:33 (Windsor and Cummington),  
 F81:28 (Amherst Collage), W83:31 (Lucas),  
 F83:3 (Cummington)  
 Music and dance S80:12, F80:22, W81:4, S81:15,  
     F81:18, S82:2;16, Su82:18, W83:11;13, S83:15,  
     Su83:8;10, F83:3;31  
 Myrick, Herbert S83:13  
  
 Nelson, Aaron W82:9  
 Nelson, Edward W82:9  
 New York State F80:14, Su81:28, S82:2, F82:2;14,  
     Su83:22;27, F83:18, W84:10;33;34  
 Newell, E. K. Su81:30  
 Newfield, Wayne Harry Su80:15  
 Noble, Fred W82:35  
 Noble, Rev. Seth Su80:2  
 Noble and Cooly Mill W84:8  
 Noony, Carl W81:9  
 Noony, Jams S83:36  
 North, John Russell Jr. W84:3  
 North Adams W84:34  
 North Blandford Kings Daughters S80:10  
 (The) North Star Magazine (excerpt) Su80:19  
 Northampton Su80:2, F80:14, W81:4, S81:2, F81:  
     18;28, Su82:12;22, W83:22;28, S83:23;32, Su83:  
     33, F83:3;22, W84:10  
     Leeds S83:23  
     Florence S83:23, F83:22  
  
 Nye, William R. S83:13  
  
 Oatley, Mr. and Mrs. W.H. F82:2;5  
 O'Connor, Charlie; Jack; Denny; Tom W82:35  
 O'Keefe, Billy W81:4  
 Old Home Day (Montgomery) Su80:15  
 Olesak, Andy; Tom; Steve W82:35  
 Oles, Lyman W84:8  
 Osborne, Edson W84:15  
 Osborne, W.J. W83:11  
 Otis S81:2, W83:11  
 Otis, Samuel G. S81:36  
 Otis Waite Brook F81:30, W83:17  
 Oysler, Hattie Su81:8  
  
 Packard, Merwin F83:22  
 Packard, Pete F83:22  
 Packard, Priscilla S80:9  
 Packard, Ralph W84:28  
 Packard brothers of Goshen W82:35  
 Paine, Timothy W83:22  
 Palmer, "Mame" W81:16  
 Palmer, Squire Su82:22  
 Paper Mills S80:23, W81:4, S83:6, Su83:8;22;30,  
     F83:3;33  
 Parades W83:13, W84:ifc  
 Parker, George F82:5  
 Parks, A.L. F82:5  
 Parks, Aaron Su80:2;25  
 Parks, Arthur S. W83:8  
  
 Partree, Dr. F82:5  
 Patt, Herman F82:14  
 Paupers S81:27, Su82:22  
 Paxton W83:28  
 Payne, Marjorie Walters W84:3  
 Pease, Arnold S83:2  
 Pease, Clarence F83:22  
 Pease, George S83:13  
 Pease, Melson S81:2  
 Pease, Nathaniel; Levi F82:2  
 Peebles Grist Mill S82:8  
 Percy, Noble W82:9  
 Perkins, Levi S80:23  
 Perkins, Robert Su81:2  
 Perry, Edward H. F83:36  
 Persson, Per W84:3  
 Peru F80:12;14, S81:2, W83:28, F83:18, W84:22  
 Pettis, Allen Su80:25  
 Pettis, Alphonso Su81:37  
 Phelon, Mr. and Mrs. Curtiss Su81:8  
 Pierce, Sarah W82:17  
 Pike, Bart F80:23

- Pirates Su81:37  
 Pitcher, Elijah Su80:3  
 Pittsfield F80:14;23, S80:2, S81:22, Su82:12, Su83:22, W84:10;22;34  
 Pittsinger, Adelaide Su81:2  
 Plainfield F83:22  
 Plankey, Margaret Parmelee F81:18  
 Platt, Albert W83:8  
 Pomeroy, Doris S82:34  
 Pomeroy, Louisa S83:6  
 Pond, Capt. W.A. W83:13  
 Pontoosuc Turnpike F80:14  
 Porter, Philip S80:26  
 Portrait Su83:15  
 Post, Dr. Richard F83:22  
 Post Offices; Post Masters F80:23, Su81:2, S82:30, F83:22;33, W83:17, S83:6;13, Su83:30, W84:8  
 Pottery Su81:24, Su83:4  
 Powell, Douglas S. and family Su81:36  
 Pratt, Dave F80:23  
 Prentice, Ann F82:16  
 Pure Food and Drug Administration W81:29  
 Putnam, Haldiman W84:3
- Quarries and mines S80:6 (soapstone); 12 (talc), Su82:12 (marble)  
 Quilting and Quilts S80:10, W81:21 (poem), Su81:2;33, F81:33  
 Quinn, Lizzy W81:4
- Radiker, Peter and family S82:30  
 Radio Su82:19  
 Railroads S80:34, F80:12;14;23, S81:22;36, F81:11;30, S82:24, S83:2;13, Su83:8;30, W84:2;10;34  
 Rathay, Ronald Su80:15  
 Recipes F80:20  
 Red Cross F83:22  
 Reed, Horace F82:16  
 Reeves, Will W83:6  
 Reeve's lumberyard F83:10  
 Remedies S80:12, Su81:34, F81:5, S82:16, Su83:17;22  
 Reminiscences S80:23, Su80:12;22, F80:23, W81:4;9;24, S81:2;15, F81:8;22, F82:34, W83:17;31;35, S83:1928, F83:31  
 Restaurants Su82:12, S83:13  
 Revolution, American Su80:2;25, F80:28, W82:9, S82:30, Su82:22, S83:15;36  
 Richardson, Henry S81:2  
 Rida, Leroy F83:22  
 Ring, Lyman T. Su82:10  
 Ripley, C.R. F82:5
- Rivers and Brooks (also see specific names) S80:28, F80:14, W81:12 (poem); 22, F81:11, S82:16;24;30;34, W83:22, S83:13;23, Su83:8;30, F83:10  
 Roads S80:6;12;35, Su80:2;22, F80:14, W81:27, S81:27, Su81:2;32;33, W82:9;13, S82:24;30;33, Su82:12, F82:14, W83:17;31, Su83:21 (poem); 33, F83:10  
 Roaring Brook Su80:26, S81:22  
 Robbins, Jacob F83:18  
 Roberts, Wayne W82:35  
 Robinson, Henry F80:19  
 Robinson and Newell minstrels W83:11  
 Rocks W81:27, F81:24  
 Rollerskating W81:4  
 Root, Daniel F80:16  
 Root, Emma C. W82:9  
 Root, Jacob F82:9  
 Root, Martin and family W81:37  
 Root, Mary Su81:8  
 Roraback, George W. F82:5  
 Rose, Timothy and family W81:37  
 Ross, Alice Scott Su83:27  
 Russell Su80:2, F80:14;19;23, W81:4, S81:22;36, Su81:32;34, F81:24, W82:35, S82:24, Su82:22, F82:2;5, W83:11, S83:6;13, Su83:8;22, F83:33, W84:3;8;15;28;34  
 Crescent Mills S80:23, F80:23, W81:4;F81:4, W84:34  
 Woronoco S80:23, Su81:32, Su83:22, F83:31  
 Russell, Mr. of Hadley S83:32
- Sage, Oren F82:2  
 Sandals S80:2  
 Sanderson, William H. W83:13  
 Savoy S80:31, S82:22  
 Sawmills, woodworking S80:17;23;28, Su80:2, W81:22, S81:36, Su81:28, W82:35, W83:6, S83:2;23, Su83:8;33, F83:3, W84:8;15  
 Sayings S83:19, F83:19  
 Scarmon, Dr. George F83:22  
 Schenna, George Su83:27  
 Schools; Colleges; Teachers Su80:15 (Montgomery, Westfield Col.); 25 (Montgomery), F80:2 (Chester); 23;28, W81:24 (Granville); 29 (Westfield Col.). S81:2 (Goshen, Swift River, Worthington, Feeding Hills); 27 (Blanford); 36 (Russell), Su81:2 (Montgomery), F81:8; 18 (Worthington), S82:30 (South Worthington); 34 (Worthington), F82:6 (Chester); 9 (Granville); 34 (Norwich Bridge), W83:17 (Middlefield); 28; 31 (Chester), S83:13 (Middlefield); 15 (Granville), Su83:10 (Hampshire High); 30 (Ban-

croft); 33 (Amherst Col.), F83:3 (Cummington); 10 (Tolland); 31, W84:28 (Blandford) S82:30 (South Worthington); 34 (Worthington)  
Schrade family of Worthington S82:2  
Scott, Ray Su83:4  
Scouts W83:2, F83:22  
Sears family of Goshen S81:2  
Seeley, Warner F83:3  
Sena, Esther F83:22  
Settlements, early Su80:2 (Montgomery); 25 (Montgomery), S81:36 (Russell), Su81:13 (Chester), S82:30 (Worthington), W83:22 (Chester, Middlefield), S83:15 (Granville); 22 (Blanford); 32 (Hampshire County)  
Seveners Concerts S82:2  
Sewing S80:10, S81:2;15, Su81:2, S82:16, F83:3  
Shafer, Geneva Su83:30  
Shakers Su83:4  
Shatterack Mountain Su80:25, S81:22, S83:6  
Shatterack River Su80:26, S81:22  
Shaw, Eben W84:22  
Shaw, Ed; Jesse W83:28  
Shaw, Martha Su83:30  
Shaw, Reriah W83:36  
Shaw, Dr. W.F. F82:2  
Sheldon, Paul Warner W81:37  
Shepard, Edward W82:9  
Shepard, harold W82:35  
Shepard, William W82:9  
Shepardson, Dr. O.J. W81:16  
Sherbow, Heinz John W84:3  
Sherwood, Frank S81:13  
Sherwood, Grace Su83:27  
Sherwood, Joseph Su83:27;37  
Shevin, Dr. William F83:22  
Siska, Linda Su81:24  
Skiing W82:4, W84:3  
Skinner, William S83:23  
Skinnerville W81:28, Su81:37, W82:9  
Sledding, sleighing, skating W81:4, W83:11;17; 31;35, S83:13  
Sleeper, Prof. H.D. W84:10  
Smiddy, James F80:23  
Smith, Albert Su80:15, W82:35, W83:8  
Smith, Doer S83:15  
Smith, Mrs. George Su80:15  
Smith, H.B. Su82:12  
Smith, Howard Su80:15  
Smith, Prof. Judson S83:2, Su83:8  
Smith Jutice F83:36  
Smith, Louise F82:16  
Smith, Matthew; Prof. Edward P.; Azariah S83:2  
Smith, Metcalf J. W81:28, S83:2  
Smith, Samuel and family W81:28  
Smithies, Lieut. Frank W83:13  
Smithies, Mr. of Chester W83:17  
Smyth, Rev. W83:11  
Snook, Dr. Mary F83:22  
Snow, Edward C. S81:27  
Snowshoeing W83:31  
Snyder, Henry H. F81:18  
Soapstone S80:6  
Social Services Su80:9, S81:27, Su81:13, Su82:22, S83:23, F83:22  
Solar Kiln S80:19  
Southampton Su80:2, W81:37, W83:22, S83:6, S83:33  
Southwick W83:11;28, S83:13, Su83:8  
Sparks, Charles W84:8  
Spellman, C.G. S83:23  
Spelman, Thomas; Daniel Su82:22  
Spelman, Miss of Granville F82:9  
Springfield S80:22;28, Su80:2, F80:12, W81:4, S81:22;36, Su81:32, F81:28;30, S82:24, Su82:12; 18, F82:2, W83:13, S83:15;32, Su83:22, W84:2; 3;34  
Springfield Republican (excerpts) F82:2;5, W83: 11, S83:13;23, Su83:8, F83:36, W84:8;10;34  
Springfield Union (Excerpts) W81:16, W83:13, S83:22, F83:10  
Spruce oil S80:12  
Squire, Gilbert and family Su80:2, Su81:2, S83:6  
Squire, James S83:6, F83:33  
Squire, Lathrop and Betsy Leffingwell; James Su81:2  
Squire, Sylvester; James; William Su80:2;25  
Squire, William F83:33  
Stables S82:12, F82:2, W83:17;31;36, S83:23  
Stagecoach F80:12;14  
Stanton, Charles H. F83:36  
Stanton, Luke; Henry W82:35  
Starkweather, Dr. Charles Robert S82:22, F83: 3;22  
Starkweather, Ezra and family S82:30  
Starkweather, William and family F81:22  
Stebbins, Mary Su82:22  
Steele, Alice S80:33, F83:3  
Sternagle, Henry Jr. and Sr. F83:18  
Stevens, Fayette F83:22  
Stevens, Lafayette and family S80:17  
Stickney, J. S83:15  
Stiles, Harry F82:2  
Stipek, Kenneth and Linda Su81:2  
Stockbridge W83:28  
Stone, Fred S80:31

- Stone, Dr. Harold F83:22  
 Stone Walls S81:20 (poem), F81:24, Su82:12, S83:31 (poem)  
 Stores and Peddlers S80:12 (Windsor), Su80:22 (Montgomery), F80:12, W81:4 (Huntington); 10:24 (Granville), 28 (Middlefield), S81:36 (Russell), S82:30 (Worthington), Su82:12 (Westfield), W83:17 (Middlefield); 18 (Hinsdale); 28 (Windsor), S83:22 (Blandford), Su83:4 (Chester); 17 (Medicine peddlers); 30 (Bancroft); 33 (Norwich Bridge), F83:3 (Cummington); 31 (Blandford); 36 (Huntington), W84:8 (Granville); 28 (Blandford)  
 Stratton, R.S. F82:2  
 Streeter, Edward B.; William F83:3  
 Streeter, H.A. F83:36  
 Sunderland F81:28, W84:3  
 Susie the Pig F82:28  
 Swart, Harrison F83:3  
 Szafranski, June F81:4
- Talc mine S80:12  
 Tanneries S81:36, W83:11  
 Taylor, Becky Su82:22  
 Taylor, E.N. F83:33  
 Taylor, Eldad W83:22, S83:15  
 Taylor, Rev. Edward W82:9  
 Taylor, Hiram S83:2  
 Taylor, Oliver W82:9  
 Taylor Brook S80:23, F80:23, W82:4, Su82:36  
 Telegraph W84:8  
 Telephone S83:13, F83:10;36  
 Temperance F80:28, Su82:22, W83:11, W84:10  
 Templeton, Mrs. Willard W82:9  
 Terry, Mrs. Wilson H. W84:10  
 Textile mills W81:4, F82:18, S83:2;22;23;;33  
 Thanksgiving Su80:22  
 Thayer, Mrs. Ernest W84:22  
 Thayer, Leon S80:31  
 Thayer, Olive F83:3  
 Thayer family of Worthington S81:2  
 Thompson, Nelson Saint W84:8  
 Thrasher, Isaac and family S82:30  
 Tiedman, Bessie Austin W81:16  
 Tiedman, Charles (William) S80:36, W81:16  
 Tinker, Charles; Clarissa Su83:22  
 Tinney, Dorothy Su81:2  
 Tirrell, Arthur W. Su81:36  
 Tirzah, Henry S83:6  
 Todd, Rev. A.E. W84:8  
 Tolland W81:22, W83:28, Su83:22, F83:10  
 Topliff, Samuel W82:9
- Torrey, Robert; Kenneth W84:22  
 Torrey, Rodney W. W81:34  
 Tower, Walter S80:17  
 Town government, taxes Su80:4;15;25, W81:34, S81:27, Su81:2, S82:22, F82:28, S83:15, Su83:8, F83:18;33, W84:8;15  
 Toys F83:3  
 Tracey, Grace W83:13  
 Transportation, vehicles S80:12, F80:14;28, W81:2;4;37, S81:2, Su81:33, F80:30, W82:4;13;35, S82:8;22;24, Su82:12, W83:2;31;35, S83:23, Su83:8;30, W84:8;28;33  
 Trails Su81:32, W83:11, F83:36, W84:8;28  
 Trolleys F81:36, Su82:12, W83:31, F83:31
- Uhl, Edward W81:27  
 Upon, Mrs. Chelsea Su83:8  
 Upson family of Westfield W82:9
- (The) Valley Echo newspaper W81:4, F81:36  
 Vaughn, Isaac W84:8  
 Volsky, Olive S80:33
- Wackerbarth, Doris S83:34  
 Wackerbarth family of Granville F82:14  
 Waite Addison and Charles and family S80:28  
 Waite Cardboard factory S80:28, S83:22  
 War of 1812 Su80:2  
 Ward, Bartholmew W81:28  
 Ward, Deacon and family W83:31  
 Warner W83:11  
 Warner, Seymour G. F82:9  
 Warner, Worcester Reed and Cornelia Blakemore F83:3  
 Washburn, Harry Su80:15  
 Washburn, Mrs. L. Edson Su80:15  
 Washington F80:14;23, Su82:22  
 Watson, E.B. F82:2  
 Watson, Joseph W83:13  
 Weather, Seasons F80:32 (poem), W81:2, W82:21 (poem), F82:11;20 (poem); 21 (poem, 31 (poem); 32 (poem), 33 (poem), W83:2;6;11;19;31;34 (poem); 35, S83:23, Su83:8, F83:10;20 (poem); 36, W84:20  
 Weaving F80:8, F81:37, Su83:4  
 Wells, Emery B. S83:23  
 Wells, Francis, R. F83:3  
 West, Laura F80:23  
 West, "Ma" Su83:30

- West Springfield W82:4, Su83:15, F83:10;31,  
     W84:8;34  
 Westfield S80:2, Su80:2;12;15;19;22;25, F80:14;18,  
     W81:4;29;37, S81:36, Su81:2;8;24, F81:7;11;24;  
     36, W82:4;9, S82:23, Su82:12;36, F82:5, W83:11;  
     13;22, S83:6;13;15;32, Su83:4;8;10;22, W84:10;  
     15;28;34  
 Hampton Ponds Su82:12  
     Wyben F81:36  
 Westfield River S80:23;34, F80:14;18, S81:22;36,  
     Su81:32, F81:24, W82:4, S82:24;30, Su82:25,  
     F82:34, W83:22;31, Su83:30, W84:34  
 Westhampton F81:24  
     Loudville F81:28  
 Weston, Bryon W81:34  
 Westover Air Base Su80:15  
 Whalley, Mr. of England S83:32  
 Whips Su80:2, Su82:12  
 Whistler, Major George Washington F80:14  
 Whiting, Thelma F83:3  
 Whitman, Dan and Cynthia Su80:2  
 Whitney, Moses W82:9  
 Whittier, Calvin F83:36  
 Wiggins Tavern W81:24  
 Wilcutt, Frank W84:8  
 Wilder, A.H. Su83:8  
 Willard, Abijah W83:22  
 Williams, Augusta Su81:2  
 Williams, E.H. F82:5  
 Williams, Gus Su80:15;19  
 Williams, James H. F83:36  
 Williams, Milton and family S81:38  
 Williams, William W83:22  
 Williamsburg F80:12, S83:23  
 Williston, Fred W83:11  
 Williston, Juliaetta S81:15  
 Will-o'-the-wisp Su80:12  
 Wilslayer, Genevieve W83:13  
 Windsor S80:12;31;33;35, W81:34, F81:5, W83:28,  
     F83:22, W84:22  
 Witherell, Alice S81:2  
 Wohl, Dr. Martin F83:22  
 Wood, Mr. of Blandford S83:36  
 Wood stoves; wood fires W81:24, S81:2, W83:6;  
     22, W84:28  
 Woodger, Mr. and Mrs. Richard F82:14  
 Wool W81:4, Su83:33  
 Woolson, Albert W81:34  
 World War I W83:13;18, Su83:37  
 World War II F80:19; F82:18  
 Worthington S80:17;19;23;26;37, Su80:22, F80:12;  
     14, S81:12, Su81:32;33, F81:18;22, S82:2;22;30;  
     34, Su82:10, W83:8;18;22;36, S83:28, Su83:8,  
     F83:22, W84:22;28  
     Ringville F80:12, W81:22  
 Wright, Betsey Su80:2, Su82:22  
 Wright, Charles S83:2  
 Wright, Nathan; Asenath Cone; Clark F82:16  
 Wronski, Roger and Linda S80:17  
 Wyman, Charles; Evelyn; Sophronia Su80:15;  
     S83:22  
 Wyman, Herbert and Norman W82:35, F83:32  
 Wyman, Percy and Gertrude Su81:20, W82:13  
     (and family), S82:23, W84:15 (and family)  
 Young, Jennie F82:2



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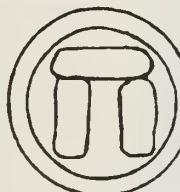


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